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LETTER DATED 28 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached letter dated 27 October 1997 which I have received from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee established pursuant to the mandate of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB).

Attached to the letter is the sixth periodic report of the Member States participating in MISAB, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1125 (1997) of 6 August 1997. I should be grateful if you would bring the letter and its enclosure to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

[Original: French]

Letter dated 27 October 1997 from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the sixth and final report, covering the period from 16 to 30 October 1997, requested by the Security Council in paragraph 6 of resolution 1125 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic.

For the Chairman of the International
Monitoring Committee

(Signed) Idriss NGARI
Vice-Chairman
General

Enclosure

Sixth report to the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1125 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic

(27 October 1997)

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the sixth and final report which the Security Council requested the Member States participating in the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) to provide pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1125 (1997).

2. This report describes developments in the situation in the Central African Republic from 16 to 29 October 1997.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

3. The International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, chaired by General Amadou Toumani Touré, is the body which directs the actions of MISAB, since it receives the necessary political guidance directly from the heads of State concerned, and especially from the President of the Gabonese Republic, who is Chairman of the International Mediation Committee.

4. The International Monitoring Committee has adopted a plan of action which reflects the gist of the main provisions of the Bangui Agreements in the form of a timetable, which can be outlined as follows:

- Formation of a government of national union;
- Adoption of an amnesty law covering those who committed offences in the context of the third rebellion;
- Disarmament (surrender of weapons by the former rebels in honour and dignity, and recovery of weapons by MISAB from militias and civilian populations);
- Implementation of the recommendations of the General Meeting on National Defence;
- Situation of former heads of State;
- Suspension of the parliamentary audit;
- Final phase of national reconciliation through a number of actions aimed at consolidating peace and security (organization of regional and sectoral awareness-raising seminars, organization of a national

reconciliation conference, elaboration of an electoral code, access by political parties to the State media and other measures).

5. MISAB is under the patronage of President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, senior head of State of the International Mediation Committee. It is under the political authority of General Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BANGUI AGREEMENTS

Implementation of the amnesty act covering offences relating to the third rebellion and the misappropriation of public funds under investigation

6. As indicated in earlier reports, the amnesty act, which was promulgated on 15 March 1997, was implemented with a great deal of pragmatism and understanding as regards the sanctions to be taken against citizens who might have been illegally in possession of weapons following the 15-day deadline established by the law.

7. This pragmatism enabled the International Monitoring Committee to negotiate with the former rebels and to persuade them to hand over their weapons with honour and dignity. It also facilitated the organization and operation of the awareness-raising and weapons recovery campaign among the civilian population between 12 August and 3 October 1997 under the direction of the Technical Commission on Disarmament, headed by the Minister to the Office of the Minister for Territorial Administration, who is responsible for public security and disarmament.

Disarmament

8. This is, without a doubt, the most delicate phase of the national reconciliation process. The operation has two major components which have made it possible to carry out this operation effectively:

(a) The awareness-raising and voluntary participation phase;

(b) The investigation, intervention and implementation-of-the-law phase.

9. The voluntary participation phase ended on 3 October 1997. The investigations, intervention and implementation-of-the-law phase began immediately after the first phase. It involves collaborating with informers compensated according to the quality of their information. This will make it possible to locate any weapons caches. During this second period, which actually began on 3 October 1997 after the head of State granted an extension, anyone found to be illegally in possession of a weapon is to be handed over to the authorities. In addition, MISAB will conduct searches, together with the national defence and security forces other than the presidential security force.

10. Activities during the second phase of disarmament have halted temporarily owing to the bereavement suffered by the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB with the sudden and tragic death of General Augustin Mombo-Moukagni, the Force Commander.

11. A coordination and security meeting will take place in the next few days to finalize the details of the operations to be conducted with a view to recovering satisfactorily the remaining weapons.

12. Since the signing of the truce agreement on 28 June 1997 and the ceasefire agreement of 2 July 1997, the following weapons have been turned over to MISAB:

Heavy weapons

Designation	Quantity	Increase (29 September-24 October 1997)
120 mm mortars	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 4	
81 mm mortars	surrendered: 13 out of a total of 15	-
60 mm mortars	surrendered: 13 out of a total of 19	-
14.5 mm machine-guns	surrendered: 6 out of a total of 6	
12.7 mm machine-guns	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 3	
75 mm recoilless guns	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 2	
73 mm anti-tank rocket launchers	surrendered: 66 out of a total of 67	
Rocket-propelled grenades	surrendered: 7 out of a total of 11	
Total	surrendered: 111 out of a total of 127	-
	(weapons recovered: 87.40 per cent)	

Light weapons

Designation	Quantity	Increase (29 September-24 October 1997)
Hand-guns (misc.)	surrendered: 16 out of a total of 111	1
Submachine-guns	surrendered: 299 out of a total of 459	2
Assault rifles	surrendered: 261 out of a total of 541	5
MAS 36-49/56-M14 rifles + muskets	surrendered: 651 out of a total of 1,181	1
Light machine-guns	surrendered: 52 out of a total of 80	1
.30-calibre machine-guns	surrendered: 15 out of a total of 17	2
Total	surrendered: 1,294 out of a total of 2,389	9
	(weapons recovered: 54.16 per cent)	0.377 per cent

13. The relatively low rate of recovery of light weapons can be explained as follows:

(a) These are light personal weapons that are easily transported and have been taken out of Bangui;

(b) Some of these weapons were probably buried: efforts to dig them up are continuing as information is provided, with varying degrees of success;

(c) Others, particularly hand-guns (automatic pistols), are easily camouflaged and may have been sold to as yet unidentified persons;

(d) Still others may have been taken from the State arsenal during the second rebellion (May 1996) and were never returned before the outbreak of the third rebellion;

(e) An indeterminate number of light weapons that have not yet been found may have been thrown into the Ubangi River or into the forest by former rebels fleeing in June 1997 after encounters with MISAB;

(f) It should be noted that some former rebels, roughly comprising a company (132 men) and all armed with light weapons, never returned to their barracks. According to knowledgeable sources, many of these may have left the Central African Republic taking their weapons with them.

14. In such conditions, the recovery of all light weapons remains uncertain, despite intensive efforts by the neighbourhood disarmament units and the active collaboration of the population.

15. A considerable quantity of munitions of various types was recovered and packaged. The status of these munitions as at 24 October 1997 is set out below:

Designation	Quantity	Remarks
5.56 mm rounds	69 084	+468
7.5 mm SLC rounds	14 000	
7.5 mm S/B rounds	123 862	+6 621
7.5 mm X rounds	34 000	
7.5 mm X S/B rounds	135	
7.62 mm rounds, NATO	15 962	
7.62 mm Kalashnikov rounds	40 660	+2 571
7.62 mm long rounds	121 261	+1
7.62 mm Tokarev rounds	2 810	+1 910
9 mm Para rounds	5 506	+207
.12-calibre riot control rounds	731	+3
12.7 mm rounds	728	+457
14.5 mm rounds	15 322	+1 130
37 fragmentation hand grenades	1 851	+4
Fragmentation hand grenades, China	3 148	+250
GR FLG AP34	16	+13
RPG 7 rockets	1 140	+9
.37 stun hand grenades	1 043	+59
FL LAC F4 hand grenades	1 304	+4
F4 hand grenades	316	
Russian grenades	1	
60 mm mortars	1 713	+8
81 mm mortars	852	+18
120 mm mortars	113	+11
75 mm recoilless rifle rounds, US	168	+2
75 mm recoilless rifle rounds, China	223	No weapons in inventory
M79 40 mm rounds, US	6 060	No weapons in inventory
Time fuses (inactive)	2 325	
7.5 mm grenade cartridges	755	
Pyro detonator	6 100	+6 100

	Results of the fourth report	Results of the fifth report	Increase
Munitions, various types	228 758	317 138	+38.63 per cent
Explosives and detonators	9 895	17 321	+75.04 per cent

A significant quantity of miscellaneous munitions, handed over loose, not suitable for firing, will be destroyed by the competent weapons and munitions units. An analysis will be made available in due course.

Recommendations from the General Meeting on National Defence

16. It appears that quite a few of the claims made by the former rebels could be answered by responsible implementation of the 282 recommendations made at the General Meeting on National Defence which was held in August 1996 at Bangui. That is why the International Monitoring Committee, true to the spirit of the Bangui Agreements, proceeded, in April 1997, to set up an ad hoc committee to examine the said recommendations carefully and to set up a schedule for their implementation, breaking them down into categories according to what could be applicable in the short, medium and long terms, based on the sensitivity of the areas to which the recommendations relate and, above all, the financial resources that would have to be mobilized. The results of the work of the ad hoc committee, which was chaired by a leader of the opposition, General Timothée Malendoma, a former Prime Minister, have already been transmitted by the International Monitoring Committee to the Ministry of Defence for implementation at the various relevant levels. Since the International Monitoring Committee is merely a mediating body, it must leave the decisions on these matters to the relevant Central African authorities, while remaining ready to serve as arbitrator should the need arise.

Situation of former heads of State

17. A revised bill was submitted by the Government to the National Assembly. Assurances were given to the International Monitoring Committee delegation by the expanded bureau of the National Assembly at the meeting on 4 September 1997 that the bill would be considered during the first weeks of the current session of the Assembly, which began on 1 October 1997. It is anticipated that the bill will be adopted on 27 October 1997.

Suspension of the parliamentary audit

18. The Bangui Agreements call for the suspension, then the abandonment "of the judicial enforcement of the parliamentary audit" opened in respect of persons presumed to have misappropriated public funds under the previous regime, for it was understood that the audit had been conducted in a very selective manner and was creating more problems than it was resolving. The International Monitoring Committee, respecting the spirit of the Bangui Agreements, proposed that the

Central African Republic should, by a legislative act, formally renounce proceedings against authors of offences identified by the parliamentary audit. It was generally agreed that such an act would undoubtedly be taken in the context of the next session of the National Assembly.

National reconciliation

19. Each of the points mentioned above constitutes as many phases on the road leading towards national reconciliation. The present section therefore concerns the final phase of this exciting process.

20. The International Monitoring Committee, supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is already engaged in making preparations for awareness-raising seminars, symposia and meetings; the first phase will take place at the provincial level and be targeted at specific groups (such as trade unions, women's organizations and youth movements), and the second phase will take place nationally, in the form of a national reconciliation conference, as recommended by the Bangui Agreements.

21. A timetable of activities covering the period 1 October to 1 December 1997 (the national holiday of the Central African Republic) was prepared jointly by the Minister for National Reconciliation, the UNDP Resident Representative and the International Monitoring Committee. This will be useful in coordinating the many activities to be carried out in this last phase of the process that began with the signing of the Bangui Agreements.

22. In the context of the restructuring of the Central African Armed Forces, the International Monitoring Committee had requested UNDP to set up a fund to assist military personnel wishing to leave active service in returning to civilian life, and UNDP had agreed to do so. UNDP launched a project on demobilization, retraining and reintegration for the Central African Armed Forces, which would enable 1,000 soldiers to return to civilian life in decent conditions and make it possible to reduce the cost of operating the armed forces and facilitate their restructuring. All Member States and international organizations may make contributions to the fund in question, which will initially be for an amount of approximately $2 million. The official signing of the project took place on Monday, 13 October 1997, and activities will get under way with the imminent arrival of the international experts.

23. A first estimate indicates that 1,000 or more soldiers will be involved in this project. UNDP has proposed Mr. Gustave Fernando González Gasques as head of the project. A national of Argentina, he has solid experience in the area of demobilization and reintegration of former soldiers into civilian life. He has managed this type of activity in Nicaragua, Mozambique, Liberia and Angola. His candidature has been accepted by the Central African Government.

COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRAL AFRICAN AUTHORITIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

24. The new electoral code recently produced by a national commission that included representatives of all political viewpoints has given rise to a disagreement over the presidency of the National Electoral Commission. The Group of Eleven Opposition Parties has requested the International Monitoring Committee to arbitrate in the matter. Various contacts are being pursued with the aim of finding a solution that is acceptable to all the parties concerned.

25. Mr. Qin Huasun, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations and President of the Security Council for the month of November 1997, made an information and working visit to Bangui from 21 to 23 October 1997. During his visit he met with the most senior officials of the State and Government of the Central African Republic and the International Monitoring Committee, the MISAB Command and individuals from diplomatic and political circles. He also visited MISAB headquarters and should be in a position to report to the Security Council his impressions of the living and working conditions of the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB.

26. Major-General Franklin van Kappen, Military Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and his Chief of Staff, Colonel François Dureau, made a working visit to Bangui from 26 to 28 October 1997. During their stay, they had numerous contacts with the civilian and military authorities of the Central African Republic, and with the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB. They will no doubt make a detailed report to both the Secretary-General and the Security Council on the outcome of their mission.

LOGISTICAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL MONITORING COMMITTEE

27. The International Monitoring Committee welcomes the recent decision by UNDP to allocate additional resources ($130,000) to it. This will enable the Committee to initiate and continue its activities in the new stage it has entered in the implementation of its plan of action:

- Political monitoring of the pursuit of operations to disarm the former rebels first in Bangui and later in other parts of the country;
- Consideration of the situation of the former heads of States;
- Abandonment of the judicial enforcement of the parliamentary audit;
- Coordination of activities relating to the organization and conduct of various seminars and conferences provided for in the context of national reconciliation;
- Solving of problems arising in the execution of the project on demobilization, retraining and reintegration for the Central African armed forces.

NECESSITY OF RENEWING THE MANDATE OF MISAB

28. Undeniable progress has been made in implementing the Bangui Agreements, but there is still a long way to go in carrying out all the main provisions of the Agreements.

29. At this time, most of the weapons taken from the state armouries during the third rebellion have been returned, but there are still suspicions that other weapons illegally imported by the political parties are present in the territory of the Central African Republic.

30. The International Monitoring Committee with its neutral and impartial status can help to pave the way for the conduct of transparent elections and peaceful and orderly electoral campaigns.

31. The social situation in the country remains tense. Students at the University of Bangui have been going on strike from time to time because the Government is six months behind in the payment of study grants. The academic year did not begin, as scheduled, on Monday, 6 October, because teachers are demanding the payment of back wages before they return to work. Some trade union groups are threatening to go on strike if nothing is done to pay them six months' back wages, wages which have gone unpaid since January 1996. Some trade unions, such as the union representing employees of the Ministry of Public Health, have already gone on strike in spite of the Government's efforts to engage in a dialogue.

32. While the mediation efforts have achieved encouraging results in the political, military and security areas, the situation in the social sphere remains problematical and may set everything back to square one. It is well not to lose sight of the origin of the crisis which broke out in April 1996 with purely corporatist demands being made initially. Everybody knows what happened after that.

33. The analysis of the situation by the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB coincides with the views expressed by the population of Bangui in general and those of the political community, across the board, in particular. Indeed there is unanimous support for the maintenance of the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB for a further three-month period, beyond the final date set by the Security Council in resolution 1125 (1997). It is to be noted that this is also the wish of the central authorities of the Central African Republic, namely, the President of the Republic and the Government of Action in Defence of Democracy.

34. The International Monitoring Committee stands ready to provide, in an impartial and neutral manner, any information and clarifications which the Security Council or the United Nations Secretariat might wish to receive.

DEPLOYMENT OF THE FORCE

35. MISAB, which is deployed throughout the city of Bangui, is ensuring security in all neighbourhoods of the Central African capital by occupying 20 surveillance posts, and is carrying out patrols nightly in each of the city's eight districts.

36. The activities of MISAB have been extended, with the agreement of the parties concerned, to operations to maintain security in the various neighbourhoods. Since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement on 2 July 1997, MISAB has participated, on the basis of a consensus, in joint security patrols with approximately 120 men, consisting of MISAB personnel and Central African security and defence forces in all districts of Bangui.

37. It should be noted that the crime rate in Bangui and the surrounding area has continued to fall. The deployment of MISAB has brought about a distinct improvement in the security situation. The image of Bangui as a peaceful city where one can go about without fearing attacks by bandits and criminals is gradually being restored. There are increasing signs of a relaxation of tensions. Economic and cultural life and organized sports are resuming, as are international contacts.

38. MISAB and the International Monitoring Committee have been in mourning: General Augustin Mombo-Moukagni, Commander of MISAB, died of a heart attack on 14 October 1997, according to information from a medical source.

39. General Mombo-Moukagni who had served for barely two months at the head of the Inter-African Force, has left his colleagues and all who knew him with the memory of a man devoted to duty and a leader of integrity. The contingents which he commanded will find a way to transform their pain into strength, reinforcing their resolve to carry on with their noble mission of peace.

40. Colonel Talla Niang, Chief of Staff, has been appointed to serve as acting Force Commander while retaining his present functions, pursuant to the decision taken by General Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee.

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO THE MISSION

41. As indicated in the previous reports, MISAB receives logistical support from the participating States, France, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Government of the Central African Republic.

42. While recognizing the generous efforts which the States participating in MISAB, France, OAU and the Government of the Central African Republic continue to make to assist the African contingents based in Bangui, it must be acknowledged that the material conditions of the troops stand in need of improvement, as they are far inferior to those enjoyed by other similar forces operating in other conflict areas. An appropriate solution to this state of affairs should be urgently found in order to avoid demoralization among the troops, which have been endeavouring up until now to carry on their work unselfishly.

CONCLUSIONS

43. The current experience with the Central African crisis is unique and is all the more stimulating in that it is unlike any previous experience. The seminar on the strengthening of African peacekeeping capacities which was recently held in Dakar and was attended by General Amadou Toumani Touré and the former Commander of MISAB, General Edouard N'kili, made a useful contribution to the study of the various aspects of this problem.

44. It is strongly recommended that the mandate of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements be extended for a further three-month period, beginning on 6 November 1997, the date on which the current mandate given by the Security Council in its resolution 1125 (1997) expires, so that it can continue to ensure security and complete its peace-building mission.

45. It must be pointed out that, owing to the insufficiency of the African countries' own resources, logistical support from the international community, along the lines of the support which France has provided to MISAB and which remains open to contributions from all other States, is still needed.

46. The International Monitoring Committee and MISAB welcome the understanding of this issue expressed by the Security Council after its consideration of the previous reports. They hope that the appeal made to the international community by the President of the Council will be met with action.

47. Bangui has entered a new era with determination, an era marked by a gradual rebuilding of confidence and the resumption of activities in numerous spheres, which is a sign that peace has been restored. That peace must now be consolidated, by taking into account all the suggestions put forward in this report in the form of conclusions. The International Monitoring Committee, for its part, will continue to spare no effort in urging all the parties to the Central African crisis to work for the effective implementation of the Bangui Agreements, as required by its mandate and as regularly called for by the Security Council.